

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS - ACTON AREA

"HOW TO RUN FOR LOCAL OFFICE"

ACTON ANNUAL TOWN ELECTION APRIL 1, 2014

PROCEDURES FOR RUNNING FOR LOCAL OFFICE

Qualifications

Any registered voter residing in the town of Acton may run for local office.

Nomination Papers

Nomination papers are available now through February 7, 2014 at the Town Clerk's Office at the Acton Town Hall (978-929-6620). The Clerk's office asks that a candidate submit, in writing, a request for nomination papers. The papers will be prepared by the Town Clerk. Candidates for office must gather the signatures of 50 registered Acton voters. Signatures must be legible and should not differ substantially from the way the names appear on the voting list.

No voter may sign more petitions for an office than there are vacancies. The Town Clerk will disqualify the signatures that exceed this limit.

The deadline for submitting completed nomination papers to the Board of Registrars at the Town Clerk's Office in Town Hall is February 11, 2014. It is suggested that each candidate collect more than the required signatures in the event of disqualification of any signature by the Board of Registrars. The deadline for withdrawing nomination papers is February 27, 2014.

Campaign Finance Reporting

Candidates and their committees, if any, are required by state law to file periodic campaign finance reports with the Town Clerk. These reports must be filed whether or not money has been raised or expended during the reporting period and whether or not the candidate is elected. Report forms may be obtained at the office of the Town Clerk and reports are due by the close of business according to a specific schedule.

ELECTED TOWN POSITIONS THAT EXPIRE IN APRIL 2014

Town Moderator

1 Year Term (1 position)

Presides over all Town Meetings, appoints nine members of the Finance Committee, and appoints Acton's representative to the Minuteman Science-Technology High School Committee.

Selectmen

3 Year Term (2 positions)

This five person board is the executive body of the town. They serve as the chief goal-setting, planning and policy making agency of the town. The board hires a town manager to administer the day-to-day affairs of the town and to implement the board's plans and policies. The board serves as the primary licensing authority for the town and is the permitting authority for all commercial development plans. The Selectmen appoint members to the more than 25 town boards, commissions and committees under their supervision.

School Committee

3 Year Term (2 positions)

The Acton School Committee is composed of six members. The Acton-Boxborough Regional School Committee is composed of the six local members plus three members elected from Boxborough. These committees are the primary education policy making bodies. They hire and give direction to the Superintendent of Schools, approve the annual school budget, develop plans for all new school construction and communicate with the public on policies, needs and conditions of education in the town.

School Committee - Additional seat created by Regionalization – effective July 2014

3 Year Term (1 position)

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Trustees of the Acton Memorial Library

3 Year Term (1 position)

The Acton Memorial Library was built in 1890 as a gift to the Town from William A. Wilde. Of the nine Trustees, three are elected by ballot for a three year term and six serve as corporate members. The Trustees set library policies, do long range planning, supervise and evaluate the Library Director, review and approve the annual library budget.

Water District Commissioner

3 Year Term (1 position)

The Water Supply District of Acton, a separate governmental entity, was incorporated by the state in 1912, is governed by three elected Commissioners who appoint a Water District Superintendent to administer the day to day operations of the Water District. The District operates and maintains wells, sets water rates and service charges, explores and drills for new water sources as well as maintaining water purity and supply.

Water District Clerk

3 Year Term (1 position)

Records the proceedings of the Annual and Special Water District Meetings after posting the warrant for each meeting. The Clerk records and certifies votes for the Dept. of Revenue, informs candidates when nomination papers are due and swears in new appointments.

MAKING THE DECISION TO RUN

- Understand the Position** Have you observed the board in action? Attend a few meetings before making your decision. How will you fit in on the board?
- Take Time to Assess Yourself** Consider your present commitments to your family, your job and your community.
- Weigh the Job & the Opposition** Weigh the tasks involved in the position you seek. Make a realistic appraisal of the person or people you are running against.
- Consider the Issues** Are you interested in the office because of a single issue? If so, you might be doing a disservice to yourself and the town. Do you have time to research the issues? Your positions should be based on facts, not emotions.
- Look at Campaign Fundamentals** Do you have the cooperation of your family and friends? Do you really want to win? Campaigning takes money, time and energy.

EFFECTIVE CAMPAIGN TECHNIQUES USED IN ACTION

- Campaign Signs** Lawn signs should be simple, one or two colors. A simple t-frame with heavy duty staples should be used for posting. Keep the number manageable as they will have to be maintained frequently. Select sites that have good visibility. Only private property can be used for political signs, you must get permission from the property owner. Be sure to pick them up the day after the election.
- Brochures & flyers** A simple flyer printed on card stock can be used at candidates' events, for mass mailing, for handouts at the Transfer Station, large gatherings or shopping areas.
- Coffee Parties** If new people can be attracted to a neighborhood coffee, it is an effective use of campaigning time.
- Candidates' Events** Organizations, such as the League of Women Voters, will hold candidates' nights. Always attend these events and come prepared to answer hard questions.
- "Dear Friend"** "Dear Friend" postcards are a personal way to contact voters. The postcard is often preprinted with a message, given to other friends who are asked to sign, address, and mail them to 50 of their friends right before the election.
- Letters to Editor** Ask 4 or 5 well-known friends to write a short letter to the local newspaper highlighting a few of your positive qualities. Letters should run each week preceding the election.
- Paid Advertising** This is a costly technique and if the ads are to be signed by people endorsing your campaign, you must have their written permission. Keep the copy simple.
- Telephoning** A well organized telephone canvass a few days before the election is very effective in reminding people to get out and vote

OTHER CAMPAIGN RESOURCES

Available from Acton Memorial Library:

Golden, Catherine. The Campaign Manager: Running and Winning Local Elections. Oak Street Press, 1996.

Grey, Judge Lawrence. How to Win a Local Election: a Step-by-Step Guide. M. Evans and Company, 1994.

Lansing, Jewel. 101 Campaign Tips for Women Candidates and their Staffs. R & B Publishers, 1991.

Available from League of Women Voters Acton Area:

League of Women Voters of Massachusetts. Ready.., get set... go!: A Candidate's Guide. LWVM, 1984.